

Beaver Lake Monitor

A publication of the Beaver Lake Management District Advisory Board

Volume 2, Issue 2

April, 1999

In this issue

Let the Ground Show Through!.....2

*Living with Natural
Landscaping and Loving It*.....3

Tax Benefits for Going Native.....3

Lake-Friendly Gardening

With springtime, our thoughts turn to flowers, lawns, and gardens. But what do our activities mean for the lake?

A trip to our local hardware, garden, or variety store reveals a dizzying array of soil amendments, fertilizers, and pesticides to "help" us develop and maintain our yards and gardens. However, most of these products are not designed to be used next to lakes and many are toxic to aquatic life forms.

Rain or irrigation can wash these toxic chemicals from our yards and shorelines right into Beaver Lake, harming fish, plants and insects and disrupting the lake's ecosystem. So, when selecting plants and products for yards and gardens within our watershed, it makes sense to ask two basic questions:

- What is the maintenance goal for our yard?
- What are the consequences of achieving this goal on our lake's health?

If you choose to have a lawn as part of your yard, look for ways to use as few chemicals as possible.

The Seattle Public Utility or the Washington Toxics Coalition offer fact sheets on lawn care alternatives. Check out their web pages at: www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/recons/n_homet.htm and www.accessone.com/~watoxic/p.htm

Gardens

Both flower and vegetable gardens require some fertilization and pest control. Most fertilizer, if properly applied, will only provide nourishment to the selected plants. However, if fertilizers are applied excessively or carelessly, the next rain or irrigation cycle will wash the chemicals into the lake, feeding aquatic plant and

(continued on page 2)

Lawn Care

Most plants found in a typical manicured lawn are not well suited for growth in the Pacific Northwest. During our dry summers, they require irrigation, and with our wet winters require regular moss removal. Lawns also require regular fertilization. You can reduce your maintenance needs by removing the lawn and replacing it with wildflowers, gardens, and other alternatives.

Garden Club Forming

Formation of the Beaver Lake Garden Club will be the topic of May 3 Beaver Lake Community Club meeting. The Beaver Lake Community Club meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Issaquah Lodge at Beaver Lake Park.

Master Gardner Wally Prestbo will lead the garden club discussion. If you have ideas for the club or want more information, contact Wally at 425-391-6599.



Let the Ground Show Through!

Replace concrete driveways or yard paths with open-design pavers. Use crushed stone as an alternative for foot-paths. Limiting the amount of impervious surface on your property gives water someplace to go. The soil on your property will store more rainwater, which will help plantings and reduce runoff and flooding from storms.

Porous Surface Ideas

Bricks, interlocking pavers, pre-cast concrete lattice pavers, or flat stones make an attractive, durable walkway. If placed on well-drained soil or on a sand or gravel bed, these modular pavers allow rainwater to infiltrate.

Controlling Weeds

To control weeds growing in-between the pavers, consider Corsican mint or moss as a natural way to crowd out weeds and add beauty to the paved area.

You can also quickly burn paver joints clear of weeds and grasses with a high-heat propane wand instead of spraying with chemicals.

Wood Decks

Wood Decks, usually installed for their functional good looks, can serve as a form of porous pavement. Redwood, cedar, and recycled plastic lumber are as durable as most other paving sur-

faces. The spacing in the decking allows rainwater to drain directly onto the soil surface and soak into the ground, maintaining the distance between the decking as recommended by your county building department will minimize the risk of wood rot.

New porous materials are also becoming available. Call the Environmental Home Center for suggestions at 206-682-7332.

(Excerpted from The Watershed Waltz and the Sammamish Swing, Pomegranate Center Press: 425-557-6412; www.pomegranate.org.)

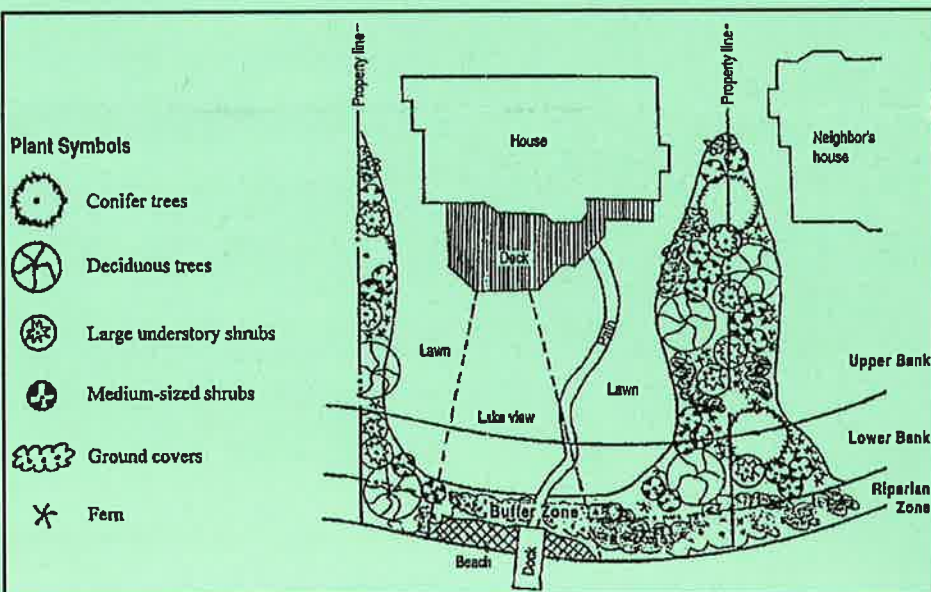
Lake-Friendly Gardening (continued from page 1)

algal growth.

Store shelves offer a multitude of "quick solutions" to pest problems. However, most garden pesticides can kill other insects and animals that are beneficial to our yards and gardens, including bees, ladybugs, worms, and birds. Using insecticides to address a pest problem may in turn harm aquatic insects in the lake that are an important food source for fish.

Minimize the need for pest control by using good horticultural practices. Choose the right plant for your site. Plants should be chosen for their tolerance to shade or light and soil type (i.e., well drained, moderately drained, and poorly drained) and watering needs. Properly prepare and maintain the site through physical controls. Handweeding, composting, and mulching will also minimize pests.

Native plants are ideal for minimum-maintenance landscaping since they have evolved for the climate and soil common to the Pacific Northwest. The WLR Division has developed a



Example of a lake-friendly landscape plan. (Illustration from Mary Jo Buza, Thurston County.)

guide to Native Plant identification and propagation. The guide and additional information are available from Eric Maia (296-8024).

Create a Lake-Friendly Yard

Remember, when living next to a lake, our yard maintenance choices can im-

pact lake water quality.

If you decide to use fertilizers and/or pesticides, **read the label** and be aware of the proper application and the consequences of its use on other parts of the environment.

Happy gardening!

Living with Natural Landscaping—And Loving It

My husband Joe and I first started looking for property in the Seattle area in 1986. We wanted at least a couple acres—five would be better. A realtor found some property on Beaver Lake. We started planning our dream home during our very first visit to the site.

The wooded lot had a large rise at the back of the property. We found a flat spot toward the lake that would allow the house to overlook the length of the lake yet still be hidden from the road. The site had a green, tranquil, resort-like beauty with lots of ferns, and trees reflected in the water. Ducks and geese squawked, while crows advised us that we were entering their territory. Because of all the natural beauty, we decided that first day that we would do as little as possible to impact the land and the lake.

There were so many trees between house and the water that we couldn't see across the lake. We decided to keep as many trees as possible to help protect the natural view from the lake.

No lawn meant less work and no fertilizer. The native plants create a landscape that is not only appealing to view as well as natural, but it also protects the lake from pollutants and runoff. I really enjoy no-maintenance gardening! Ironically, as I write this, a study has just revealed that streams in our area are polluted with Diazinon. Our water is contaminated and wildlife is dying. This pollution may also be the mystery of the deformed frogs. Where are the frogs we used to have around here? Have people poisoned the frogs' watery environments in order to have the "perfect lawn"?

We did not build a dock, (in fact, we have never been on the lake) so the natural lakefront is a good buffer and a good filter for pollutants before they get



Preserving the lush woodland habitat around Beaver Lake benefits people, plants, fish, and water quality.

Tax Benefits for Going Native

We bought the property in 1986 when most of Klahanie was still a forest. Our property taxes have risen to astronomical heights. Fighting our taxes did not accomplishing anything.

However, this year our property (minus the house and the driveway) was accepted into the Public Benefit Rating System, a program administered by King County Water and Land Resources Division. This program encourages long-term protection or management of open space resources in King County. Working in conjunction with Washington State law, it grants tax breaks to property owners who commit to not developing their property to its full extent.

Since we left our property in a natural state and plan on continuing

to do so and met certain criteria, we qualify.

We have received points for:

- Aquifer protection area;
- Urban or growth area open space; and
- Significant plant, wildlife (in our case, pileated woodpeckers), or salmonid habitat.

This will save us 60% of our taxes on the property in the program. It does pay to protect the water and other natural resources!

For more information about the Public Benefit Rating System within King County, contact Ted Sullivan at 206-205-5170.

(continued on page 4)

Living with Natural Landscaping (continued from page 3)

into the water. It also creates an environment that geese do not like, so we also have no geese problems. The wild water-front creates places for all the "critters" to live, and what a menagerie we have. Joe says the deer have a condo in our woods. Many days you can see them lounging up there for hours.

I've noticed an interesting thing about the property. Even while we were building the house in 1992, there was never any mud. No matter how much rain we have there is no mud, and only one small area that puddles.

More than ever, I realize how important our property is to the water quality. We are in a recharge area for the aquifer. Pollutants head directly for our water supply and Beaver Lake. This fact makes it essential to use detergents with no phosphates, since our septic drain

field also percolates to the water table. What an important job we have—being good land and water stewards.

(Thanks to Vicky Giannelli for this article.)

UPCOMING EVENT

**Landscaping the
Lake-Friendly Way**

Saturday, May 22

Renton Community Center

**Debra Bouchard
206-296-1989**



KING COUNTY

Department of Natural Resources

**Water and Land Resources Division
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2200
Seattle, WA 98104**



Beaver Lake Monitor

The Beaver Lake Monitor is published by the Beaver Lake Management District Advisory Board with the assistance of King County Water and Land Resources Division.

BEAVER LAKE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

Donna Carlson	557-8342
Joe McConnell	391-0661
Al Sauerbrey	392-3964
Lisa Shank	392-5010
Sharon Steinbis	557-5395
Bob White	557-6798

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Writer	Sharon Walton
Layout	Sally Thomas

TO CONTACT US

Beaver Lake Monitor (206) 296-8382
c/o King County Dept. of Natural Resources
Water & Land Use Division
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2200
Seattle, WA 98104

Email: sharon.walton@metrokc.gov

Web page: <http://splash.metrokc.gov/wrl>

BULK RATE

U.S Postage
PAID
Seattle, WA
Permit No.
6013